

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9415

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, ETRN, CI

SUBJECT: AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT

REF: SANTIAGO 3957

1. SUMMARY: AN AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY TEAM VISITED CHILE MAY 21-23 AT THE INVITATION OF THE "GROUP OF TEN". IN MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT PINOCHET, WITH THE "GROUP OF TEN" AND WITH OTHER LABOR LEADERS, AND IN AN END-OF-VISIT PRESS CONFERENCE, THE TEAM EMPHASIZED THE SUPPORT OF US LABOR FOR INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONISM AND FOR A PROMPT RETURN TO FULL TRADE UNION FREEDOMS. THE TEAM BELIEVES IT OBTAINED A COMMITMENT FROM THE GOC TO PERMIT AIFLD TO HOLD SEMINARS WITHOUT REQUESTING PRIOR APPROVAL. ALTHOUGH THE TEAM WAS DISCOURAGED BY WHAT THEY SAW AND HEARD, DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION ELEMENTS WERE HEARTENED BY THE VISIT. WHETHER PINOCHET AND HIS ADVISERS CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE US LABOR ATTACHES TO TRADE UNIONS FREEDOMS, AND PARTICULARLY THE ABILITY TO HOLD ELECTIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS, IS NOT CERTAIN. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEGACY OF A HIGHLY POLITICIZED TRADE UNION MOVEMENT MAY CONTINUE TO DOMINATE GOC PERCEPTIONS AND, TO SOME EXTEND, THE ACTIONS OF DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISTS. END SUMMARY.

2. WHAT HAPPENED. A POWERFUL AND ELOQUENT SOLIDARITY TEAM VISITED SANTIAGO "TO TRY TO BRING THE VARIOUS DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISTS TOGETHER". THE DELEGATION

LEADER, THOMAS "TEDDY" GLEASON, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN ASSOCIATION AND VICE PRESIDENT OF BOTH THE AFL-CIO AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FEDERATION TOLD GENERAL AUGUSTO PINOCHET, PRESIDENT OF CHILE, THAT HE WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE LACK OF RESPECT FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOMS AND WOULD LEAVE CHILE LESS FAVORABLY INCLINED THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED. AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENT, SOL "CHICK" CHAIKIN, PRESIDENT OF THE ILGWU IN PARTICULAR TOLD PINOCHET THAT "TIME WAS NOT A FRIEND OF THIS GOVERNMENT" AND URGED THE RAPID RESTORATION OF TRADE UNION FREEDOMS IN CHILE ESPECIALLY THE RIGHT TO ELECT TRADE UNION OFFICERS. CHAIKIN EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS WERE POLARIZING CHILEAN SOCIETY DRIVING DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION LEADERS EITHER TO THE EXTREMES OF THE RIGHT OR LEFT WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD AGAIN TO A CONFRONTATION AS OCCURRED IN 1973. HE EMPHASIZED AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT TRADE UNION ELECTIONS WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME WERE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO AVOID THIS TYPE OF SITUATION. THE TEAM LEFT A MEMORANDUM THAT URGED THE GOC TO CONDUCT "FREE AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS". GLEASON ADDED THAT HE ALSO PASSED THIS MESSAGE ON TO THE GOC THROUGH WENCESLAO MORENO, CHILEAN LABOR ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON.

3. SUPPORT FOR THE TEN. THE AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENTS MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE IN CHILE AT THE INVITATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE "GROUP OF TEN" AND THEY MET REPEATEDLY WITH ALL OR PART OF THE GROUP. HOWEVER THEY STATED CLEARLY THAT THEY DID NOT REGARD THIS GROUP AS THE ONLY LEGITIMATE TRADE UNION GROUP IN CHILE AND OFFERED A HAND OF SUPPORT TO ALL DEMOCRATIC AND FREE TRADE UNIONISTS. IN AN EMOTIONAL MEETING TOWARDS THE END OF THE VISIT EDUARDO RIOS, ERNESTO VOGEL AND TUCAPEL JIMENEZ ATTEMPTED TO DESCRIBE THE PERSONAL HARDSHIP CAUSED BY GOC HARASSMENT. ALL SAID THAT THEY WERE ALIVE TODAY ONLY BECAUSE OF USG AND AFL-CIO SUPPORT IN THE PAST. GLEASON VISIBLY MOVED GAVE THEM A PERSONAL GUARANTEE OF PROTECTION.

4. BROADENING THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE. ALTHOUGH THE AFL-CIO TEAM WAS SPONSORED BY THE GROUP OF TEN" OR THE "DINAMICOS" IT MET WITH VARIOUS OTHER TRADE UNION LEADERS. THE PURPOSE OF ALL THESE MEETINGS WAS TO ENCOURAGE GREATER COOPERATION AMONG DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISTS. WITH "DINAMICO" LEADER TUCAPEL JIMENEZ, PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, THE GROUP MET WITH HERNOL FLORES, SEC-GEN OF THE PRO-GOVERNMENT UNTRACH AND WITH CARLOS ORTEGA, PRESIDENT OF THE BANK WORKERS. GLEASON ALSO MET PRIVATELY WITH MORENO AND MARTIN BUSTOS, PRESIDENT OF STEVEDORES AND

GOC APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF PARALLEL COMACH. THE ENTIRE TEAM ALSO MET WITH INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNINISTS, FEDERICO MUJICA, PRESIDENT OF THE PRIVATE EMPLOYEES CONFEDERATION, SALVADOR CASTRO, PRESIDENT OF METAL MECHANICS FEDERATION AND RICARDO GALLIANI, PRESIDENT OF THE EMPLOYEES IN STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES. ADDITIONALLY, THE TEAM SAW THE FOLLOWING OUSTED LABOR LEADERS: MILTON PUGA, CARLOS ARRELLANO AND GUILLERMO SANTANA OF THE COPPER WORKERS, ANDRES DEL CAMPO OF THE BANK WORKERS AND EDWIN KEIM OF THE AIRLINE WORKERS.

5. AIFLD SEMINARS. THE TEAM BELIEVED THAT A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE VISIT WAS TO OBTAIN PINOCHET'S CONSENT TO CONDUCT AIFLD SEMINARS WITHOUT PRIOR GOC AUTHORIZATION. AS CHAIKIN POINTED OUT, NOTHING WAS WRITTEN DOWN, BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PINCOEHT DID TURN TO HIS LABOR AND INTERIOR MINISTERS AND MADE SURE THEY HAD TAKEN NOTE OF THE TEAM'S STATEMENT THAT SUCH AUTHORIZATION SHOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDERS WILL RECEIVE APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS, BUT AIFLD HAS ALREADY TESTED THE WATERS, IN VALPARAISO, WITHOUT INCIDENT.

6. THE "INDEPENDENCE" IMPERATIVE. THE AFL-CIO TEAM STRESSED THE NEED FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT, CHURCH AND POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT GOC ATTEMPTS TO "TRAIN" TRADE UNION LEADERS AND THE CONTINUED INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISTS IN THE CHILEAN LABOR MOVEMENT. THE TEAM EMPHASIZED TO THE GOC THAT IN THEIR CONSIDERED JUDGMENT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO BEGIN NOW THE PROCESS OF ELECTING TRADE UNION LEADERS, FOR IF THEY DELAYED MORE THAN THREE TO SIX MONTHS IT WOULD DRIVE DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISTS TO EITHER THE RIGHT OR LEFT AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST. WHEN PINOCHET POINTED TO A COMBINED COMMUNIST-DEMOCRATIC MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION AS EVIDENCE THAT THEIR HOSTS WERE BEING MANIPULATED IF NOT CONTROLLED BY COMMUNISTS, THE TEAM USED THIS EXAMPLE TO DRIVE HOME THEIR POINT THAT NORMALIZATION OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITY WAS AN URGENT PRIORITY TO AVOID POLARIZING THE CHILEAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

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PRIVATELY WITH THE "DINAMICO" LEADERS, THE TEAM WARNED
OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC
AND COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONISTS COULD CAUSE FOR FUTURE
AFL-CIO SUPPORT.

7. CHILEAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REACTION TO THE VISIT.
THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC OFFICIAL REACTION TO THE VISIT.
THE LESS RESPONSIBLE PRESS IS CALLING IT ANOTHER EXAMPLE
OF YANKEE INTERVENTION AND LINKING THE VISIT TO OTHER
POLITICAL EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE SAME WEEK
(A HUNGER STRIKE BY RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS
AND THE VISIT OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICIALS IN
CONNECTION WITH THE LETELIER CASE). HOWEVER,
SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS
MAGAZINES ARE POINTING OUT THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT
HAS WAITED TOO LONG FOR RESTORATION OF ITS RIGHTS.
MOREOVER, INTERNALLY THE GOC HAS BEGUN TO SET UP
SCENARIOS IN WHICH IT CAN MEET AT LEAST SOME OF THE
"SUGGESTIONS" OF THE AMERICAN LABOR GROUP (BUT PROBABLY
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EXCLUDING TRADE UNION ELECTIONS). OTHER DEMOCRATIC
LEADERS, SOME OF THOSE IN THE GOC-SPONSORED UNTRACH,
ENCOURAGED BY THE STRONG SUPPORT SHOWN BY THE AFL-CIO
TEAM TO DEMOCRATIC LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, STEPPED UP THE
STRENGTH OF THEIR OWN DEMANDS FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOMS.

8. COMMENT: THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT AND US LABOR SHARE
ANTI-COMMUNISM AND, IN THEORY AT LEAST, THE BELIEF THAT
ORGANIZED LABOR SHOULD ACT INDEPENDENTLY FROM PARTY

POLITICS. WHEREAS US LABOR CAME TO ITS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AS THE RESULT OF A HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT ACHIEVEMENT, THE PINOCHET REGIME IS ATTEMPTING TO INSTITUTE TRADE UNION INDEPENDENCE BY GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION. EVEN AFTER ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THIS IS A TRANSITORY MILITARY GOVERNMENT, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENT OF ILLOGIC IN SUCH AN EFFORT. SO FAR AS WE ARE ABLE TO JUDGE, PINOCHET AND HIS CLOSEST ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ADVISERS HAVE NOT ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONISM MUST START WITH THE GUARANTEE AND OBSERVANCE OF BASIC LABOR RIGHTS.

9. HISTORICALLY THE CHILEAN LABOR MOVEMENT HAS BEEN HIGHLY POLITICIZED. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO THINK THAT EITHER AS A RESULT OF GOC "REFORMS" OR THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT AND SUPPORT OF US LABOR THAT THAT SITUATION IS GOING TO CHANGE RADICALLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. AND WE DO NOT THINK THE SOLIDARITY TEAM MADE ANY SUCH LEAP OF FAITH. SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND RADICAL PARTIES DECIDE IN THE FUTURE TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY A BROAD ALLIANCE (FRENTE AMPLIO) WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS AGAINST THE MILITARY REGIME, WE WOULD PREDICT WITH CONFIDENCE LABOR UNION COORDINATION INVOLVING AT LEAST SOME OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERS.

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10. THE VISIT OF THE SOLIDARITY TEAM SERVED THE IMMEDIATE AND MOST PRESSING PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING THE US LABOR MOVEMENT'S UMBRELLA FOR THE "GROUP OF TEN". THAT IT DID THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPPORT FOR ALL DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION LEADERS IS, WE BELIEVE, IMPORTANT. THE AFL-CIO VICE-PRESIDENTS MADE CLEAR TO PINOCHET, AS WELL AS TO THE DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION LEADERS THEMSELVES, THAT OUR SUPPORT IS NOT TIED TO ANY POLITICAL FACTIONS WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC SECTOR. THIS CLARIFICATION OFFERS THE HOPE OF BROADER AND STRONGER OPPOSITION TO CONTINUED GOC RESTRICTIONS OF LABOR FREEDOMS. THERE IS ALREADY AN APPARENT EFFORT BY SOME OF THE MORE TIMID DEMOCRATIC LEADERS TO SHOW THAT THEY TOO SUPPORT AN EARLY END TO SUCH RESTRICTIONS. IN PART THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE VISIT TO SPEAK OUT MORE CLEARLY. IN PART THEIR OWN POSITIONS AS LEADERS DEPEND ON NOT APPEARING TO LAG BEHIND ON THIS ISSUE.

11. LABOR ATTACHE COMMENT. THE HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL BONDS TIEING CHILEAN WORKERS AND THEIR UNION LEADERS TO POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE DETERIORATED AS A RESULT OF THE GOC BAN ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY. AS A RESULT OF THIS BAN, THE

GOC HAS DESTROYED THE ABILITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES TO CONTROL AND INFLUENCE AFFILIATED TRADE UNION LEADERS. IN THE PAST, POLITICAL PARTIES EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED THEIR LABOR LEADERS BY MAINTAINING PARTY CONTROL OVER THE UNION SLATE OF CANDIDATES IN UNION ELECTIONS. FEW INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES COULD BE ELECTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND HARDLY ANY WERE SUCCESSFUL AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. HOWEVER, SINCE ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN OUTLAWED, POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE FOUND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO INFLUENCE THEIR LABOR LEADER AFFILIATES. ALTHOUGH FEW MEN HAVE ABANDONED THEIR POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND MOST ARE STILL PROUD OF THEIR PRE-COUP PARTY AFFILIATION, TRADE UNION LEADERS DO NOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEPARATE THEIR UNION RESPONSIBILITIES FROM PARTY DEMANDS. DECISIONS RELATING TO THEIR UNIONS ARE MADE RELATIVELY FREE OF PARTY INFLUENCE. THE "GROUP OF TEN" STANDS AS A MAJOR EXAMPLE OF THIS NEW AND HEALTHY INDEPENDENCE FROM POLITICAL PARTY CONTROL IN THAT THREE ARE FORMER FREI WING PDC, TWO FORMER TOMIC WING PDC, TWO ARE MILITANT RADICALS AND ONE WITHOUT ANY PARTY AFFILIATION. ALL THESE MEN ARE ANTI-COMMUNIST AND HAVE COOPERATED TOGETHER ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE FREE OF PARTY CONTROL. NONE OF THESE TRADE UNIONISTS OR OTHER TRULY DEMOCRATIC UNION LEADERS WOULD NOW ABANDON THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND TURN THEIR UNION OVER TO THE DICTATES OF A PARTY BOSS.
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